




Leçon orale

DOSSIER KOHINOOR



Indian newsreport voicing scathing criticism of British colonialism

ANALYSE UNIVERSITAIRE



Pbmatique:

I will study the way in which the Kohinoor controversy leads the Indian newscaster to voice a scathing criticism of British colonialism.

I. Denouncing British colonialism and official history

- ▶ *Opportunity to show knowledge of Indian history and British colonial history*

[Reminder : India became a British colony in 1858 —> a 'Raj'. India was called the 'Jewel in the Crown' of the British Empire.

Indian independence: 1947 (Partition into two separate countries: India and Pakistan)

India became a Republic / part of the Commonwealth]

- ▶ Criticism of British imperialism: diamond 'acquired' then 'stolen' (evolution in the terms used, from neutral to accusatory). British greatness = the result of theft (British Museum as 'the world's largest museum of stolen artefacts')
- ▶ Criticism of royalty —> no expression of grief about Elizabeth II's death; a veiled social comment: the crown might break the Queen's neck *if she looked down* —> royals are disconnected from the real world // colonialism/imperialism/royal family —> an Indian object became the symbol of royal/imperial power

I. Denouncing British colonialism and official history

- ▶ Comment on editing: multiple images of royals/crowns
—> This questions the very symbols and ceremonials of the monarchy: all a show/Kohinoor as a prop
- ▶ Butchering Indian identity: recutting of Kohinoor as 'a shallow oval brilliant' —> The UK was not satisfied with the original Indian stone but lost carats in the process —> symbolic representation of British imperial appropriation and erasure of the cultural wealth of colonized people.
- ▶ A lasting problem: past spoliation not repaired. The royal family has not returned the diamond —> Indians today are making their voices heard.

II. Not a neutral newsreport: rhetorical strategies

- ▶ From the factual and historical to the political: **from neutrality** 'annexation', 'acquired' **to didactic posture** 'let's also give you a sense of history' **to scathing criticism** 'stolen artefacts' —> sarcastic tone + irony + use of air quotes '*legally procured*'
Goal: to create complicity with the audience
- ▶ A **truthful yet simplistic account**: binary oppositions (them vs us, the UK vs India, the elite vs the people)
- ▶ The presenter's voice as a **relay for Indians' outrage** on social media
- ▶ The presenter's pessimism shows empathy for demand ('*bleak chances*')
- ▶ Use of **colloquial language** '*hey there*' '*pretty much*'
- ▶ Presenter as the voice of the people but **alone on set/no expert/her voice is unquestioned** —> **demagogy?**

II. Not a neutral newsreport: rhetorical strategies

- ▶ Questionable journalistic methods?

Using tweets as arguments (second-hand information) + reported speech: *'to quote a BBC documentary', 'even the British Museum is accused of being...'*

- ▶ Challenging the authority of Indian institutions? —> the decision of the Indian Supreme Court *'coincided'* with the visit of William and Kate in 2016 (2'00) —> remnants of British colonialism?
- ▶ Comment on the US interest in this topic (John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight*) + News 18 channel = part of the CNN group
- ▶ Newsreport in English

B1

- ▶ Photograph of cultural and political protest for the restitution of '**looted**' African artworks
- ▶ Similar stance as in A (anti-colonial, contemporary fight against past wrongs)
- ▶ Photo staged in front of world-renowned auction house
- ▶ Pan-African flag

B2

- ▶ Excerpt from UNESCO speech on cultural heritage
- ▶ Plea for the return of artefacts to rebuild national identity
- ▶ Past 'spoliation'
- ▶ Calling on ancient Greece
- ▶ Hoping for a better future / equality between nations ('mutual respect between nations')